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262 1930's that the Ngoni did not live as well as they might and had, in fact, an impoverished diet, because they did not make full use, and sometimes very little use, of the milk and meat which they had available. In pre-European days, when the possession of cattle was confined to the Paramount, the chiefs and leading *alumuzana*, there was a continuous slaughter of animals to provide a regular diet of meat and *ulubende*, the cooked blood which the Ngoni liked very much. The heads of the big houses saw that there was always on hand *amasi*, the milk curds which was the form in which adults took their milk, fresh milk being reserved for young children and herd-boys. This provision of meat, *ulubende* and *amasi* was only possible for those who had plenty of cattle, [721] and in both kingdoms wars and raids were carried out partly to obtain fresh supplies of cattle from neighbouring and unconquered tribes. As we saw in the chapter on the Paramount, in pre-European days the *alumuzana* who lived near enough to the royal village made a practice of calling frequently, if not daily, and such calls were rewarded by their being asked to eat with the Paramount, and 'food' in those days was predominantly meat. Between fighting seasons, that is during the rains, the young men (*amajaha*) who were newly recruited to the regiments [883] were kept busy in and around the Paramount's village and the head villages of the *alumuzana*, mending fences, making shields, and clearing new land. When they were thus employed they also were fed by the Paramount or *mulumuzana*, who regarded these periodic feasts for the *amajaha* as one of the first calls on the consumption of his cattle. The Ngoni later rationalized this earlier procedure of restricting meat and milk consumption to certain groups of people by arguing that it made the young warriors strong and able to fight and endure hardships, and they declared that the senior men and women who also shared the Paramount's supplies lived long and had great wisdom and strength of character. This rationalization was not only looking back to a past Utopia. It was also based on the argument that Europeans ate meat regularly and that they were strong, both physically and politically.

262 178 The European criticism in the 1930's that the Ngoni did not make full dietary use of their cattle and their products was justified, but there are two factors to note in this connexion. One was that the number of those who lived well on meat and milk in the old days was relatively small—confined in fact to cattle-owners, women owners of big houses, and warriors. The situation changed after the Europeans came, and a large number of people owned a few cattle and many of the new owners had no tradition about using their products. Among the cattle-owners of the Swazi clans the tradition of cooking blood and making curds continued and both were valued as food, but some of those who had only recently become owners of cattle did not know these practices, and 262 I came across many cattle-owners of local tribes who did not know how 278 to milk a cow. The failure to use milk in the Ngoni diet was due partly

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to the method of rearing calves by letting them take all the milk they wanted, and partly to the practice of letting the herd-boys have the rest. In villages under a *mukumuzana* of a Swazi clan, who had a wife in his big house also of a Swazi clan, the consumption of milk was to some extent organized. These senior women saw that the herd-boys brought them a certain amount of milk each day, and they gave it to young children or invalids, and made some into *amasi*.

Another practice which restricted the use of meat and milk as regular items of diet was that the building up of the herds was regarded as a primary responsibility of the owners and guardians of cattle. Hence calves were given milk, which in western countries would be drawn off for human use, and the killing of beasts, unless they were sick, was restricted to selling the meat for cash or using it in ritual. One of the embarrassments suffered by an anthropologist was being presented with a beast by people who hardly ever killed one for their own use. It was true that a general share-out took place when the beast was killed, but it was none the less one beast fewer in the herd, and it was the maintenance and increase of the herds which was the cattle-owners' chief concern.

This emphasis on numbers rather than quality, which caused so much misunderstanding between government departments and cattle-owners, was closely related to the forms of exchange in cattle. Formerly cattle were handed over either as *lobola* or as penalties for the infringement of laws. Both these forms of transfer continued, but there were additional demands which cattle-owners or potential owners had to be aware of in watching the increase or diminution of their herds. One characteristic of these modern forms of exchange was the ready convertibility of cattle into cash and of cash into cattle. We have seen how young men away at work sent money back to their fathers or fathers' brothers to buy cattle. We have seen too how the possession of cattle made it possible to sell a beast and obtain cash for various purposes, and the proximity of markets where there were butchers' stalls encouraged this sale of cattle.

One of the most frequent reasons for the conversion of cattle into cash was for the purpose of hiring labour. We saw in Chapter I of this section how Lopati Nzunga killed cattle to feed the men who carried bricks and cement for his brother's tomb and sold another beast to pay wages to the bricklayers. The traditional way of paying labourers had been by feeding them with meat, and the modern method was to pay them cash wages [illegible] to find the money for it by the sale of cattle. Such labour could be for cultivating, house-building, fence-building, road-making and other local work. The possession of cattle which were easily convertible into cash made possible this payment of labour, and this relationship between the role of cattle-owner and the role of employer of labour was common.

575 there. It was a rough Spartan existence, where individual feelings and preferences had little scope, and where the younger ones were kept busy from dawn to dusk. Ngoni elders believed and indeed it was a key concept in their [858] culture, that boys should be kept busy all the time and made [515] to wash in cold water. Bathing in the cold streams of the Ngoni highlands was part of dormitory life. No Edwardian father talked more piously and convincingly about the merits of cold baths than Ngoni parents did.

575 The boys living in the dormitory continued to be fed from 264 their mother's household. The older boys had their food brought by a child to the kraal gate as was done for their fathers. The younger ones sometimes fetched their own and took it to the kraal gate where they sat on the extreme edge of the men's group. More often they were given what was left over from their fathers' and older brothers' servings. [146] This procedure accounted for the inadequate amounts eaten by the younger boys, though they drank some milk when [272] milking the herds and out at the grazing grounds they made [262] curds and caught birds and baked them in clay. Sometimes the desperation of hunger drove them to steal maize cobs or ground nuts from their mother's granary to roast in the [685] ashes of their fire. This kind of stealing was condemned as very wrong by Ngoni standards, and sometimes older boys, in order to show their authority, forced the young ones to steal in this way on their behalf.

575 What effect did dormitory life produce on the boys? The [867] Ngoni parents, the fathers that is, expected it to produce [155] toughness, leadership, responsibility and respect for authority. On the whole it was successful. The Spartan life ensured toughness, the herding of cattle demanded responsibility and leadership, and the smooth running of dormitory society was based on respect for authority and obedience to it. From time to time the younger boys ganged up together to protect themselves from over-exploitation, and learned in these efforts at resistance the value of joint action. There was con-

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535 628 is now danced by villages. The important men in one village suggest to another village that this dance should be held in the latter village. If this is agreed, beer is brewed in the second village and on the prearranged day many people from the first village come in procession from their village to the dance. The visiting dancers enter the cattle byre and start to dance. They are joined by people from the home village. The dancers are arranged in two lines, men on one side and women on the other, and the dance consists of a series of virtuoso performances by two or three men and women at a time in the space between the two lines, to the accompaniment of clapping and antiphonal singing. The dance is followed by drinking and more dancing. Later in the year, or in the next year, the host village goes to the home of the visitors, and the performance is repeated. [533]

535 628 883 Of more frequent occurrence are dances involving girls only. These are usually held on Sunday afternoons, and as at the *ngoma* dances, at least two villages are involved. Here the initiative is taken not by the important men but by the senior unmarried girl in the village. She invites a girl of similar status in another village with whom she is acquainted, or whom she has seen dancing, to bring a team of girls to dance in her village. This kind of dance is competitive in that the visitors are opposed by a similar team of girls from the home village, who dance separately from the visitors until, at the end of the session, the two teams combine. That team which has danced best is held to be the winner, although there is always great doubt as to which team this is. The girl who invited the visitors is responsible for seeing that the visiting team is fed, although beer is not provided. No work is done in the gardens on Sundays, so that these dances always attract a large number of onlookers. As with *ngoma*, a return match is danced at some later date. The pairs of villages that are linked in these dance exchanges are not always those that contain many people related to one another. One girl may ask an acquaintance in another village to find a team; in one case the girl who made the invitation did not know the name of the girl she was inviting.

Beer-drinking

273 [271] [574] [272] Beer, water, and tea are the three main drinks of the Ngoni. The ordinary rules of hospitality govern the drinking of water, which is provided for the traveller whenever he asks for some. Tea is sold in the roadside stores known as hotels. Beer is more important socially